



THE

KNIGHT



November-December 2003

VOLUME 26 No. 2. Issue #138. The LITHUANIAN Numismatic Association. Frank Passic, EDITOR.

10th ANNIVERSARY OF THE LITAS: A SONG OF FAREWELL. Bankers are preparing for the demise of the litas.

By Renaldas Gabartas

From KAUNO DIENA, June 26, 2003

Translated by Aleksandras Radžius

After a break of more than 50 years, the national currency, which was to insure the economic lifeline of the country, appeared in public on June 25, 1993. Having survived many challenges and having earned for itself a reputation as being one of the most stable old-world currencies, the litas is getting ready to step aside. The Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania stated that in about three and one-half years the litas will "die naturally" when Lithuania joins the European Union.

The Mission is Being Implemented. During the official commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the litas, R. Šarkinas was pleased to state that the litas fulfilled its most important functions, in spite of the fact that the course of introduction of the national currency was not smooth. The first issue notes printed in the United States were of poor quality and poorly protected from counterfeiting. When the litas was pegged to the US dollar, inflation was halted, savings did not lose value, it was possible to increase exports and to decrease the foreign trade deficit, to maintain a stable exchange rate for the currency and to prevent government officials from interfering with monetary policies.

In October of 1991, litas coins were delivered to the vaults of the Bank of Lithuania and the banknotes, in November. However they were not placed into circulation for two and a half years. Political and macroeconomic experts argued over the currency statutes. However, they finally agreed to discard independent monetary policies and choose rather to have a guarantee of stability.

From the beginning, the litas was backed by gold and foreign hard currency. In 1993, these reserves were valued at 730 million litai and at this time they are valued at 8 billion 200 million litai. During its 10 years, the litas was never in danger of being devalued. It was one of the strongest symbols of our statehood.

Interestingly, at this time there are 4.65 billion litai worth of our national currency in circulation. Every day 55 tons of litai banknotes and over 900 tons of coins exchange hands.



ABOVE: R. Šarkinas, Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania

"If all the banknotes were placed end-to-end, the border of Lithuania could be covered four times. And if all the coins were to be stacked into one pile, the stack would be 652 kilometers high," said R. Šarkinas.

Change is Unavoidable. The Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania said that just as the litas was successfully pegged to the US dollar, so last year the litas was pegged to the euro. At this time, the euro of the European Union is performing the same function as the dollar, however using the euro in daily transactions or in foreign trade would be much simpler and cheaper.

"Since the European Union is our main trading partner, once the euro is introduced, our transactions will be
(Continued next page...)

2. (Continued from page 1...)

simplified and tradesmen will not have to be concerned with fluctuations in exchange rates and it will be easier for travelers," said R. Šarkinas.

It is predicted that next year negotiations with the European Union will begin on the mechanism for joining the common currency. Theoretically this can be accomplished in July of 2004. After two and a half years, in January 2007, after complying with the requirements set by the European Monetary Union, the euro could be introduced in Lithuania.

"The only negative aspect of the introduction of the euro would be the sentiments over the beautiful and dependable national currency," stated the Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania.

Yesterday afternoon R. Šarkinas left for Frankfurt-on-the-Main where he will attend with the rights of an observer, together with chairmen of the banks of other candidate countries to the European Union, a meeting of the Directors of the European Central Bank.

Bankers are glad that our country already meets all requirements for the introduction of the euro.

When asked if prices will rise in Lithuania as they did in other countries when the euro was introduced, R. Šarkinas reassured us that prices could rise only because at this time prices are about half of those in European Union countries. The Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania did not agree that prices would rise only due to the introduction of the euro.

R. Šarkinas also noted that, in preparation for membership in the European Monetary Union, there are no complicated tasks that need to be accomplished. A couple of monetary statistical issues will have to be addressed as well as some accounting items and the modification of the statutes of the Bank of Lithuania dealing with the structure of the directors of the Bank of Lithuania.

"There is no need to change the statutes regarding the backing of the litas, since pegging it to the euro does not effect its backing, and on the introduction of the euro, the litas will die naturally," said the Chairman of the Bank of Lithuania.

It is predicted that the litas will be exchanged at the same rate at which it was pegged since last summer: 3.4528 litai to the euro.

The Mindaugas Commemorative Coin. On the birthday of the litas, the 34th commemorative coin was issued. It is the first [bi-metallic] coin made of gold and silver, having a nominal denomination of 200 litai. It commemorates the 750th anniversary of the coronation of King Mindaugas and will be sold at branches of the Bank of Lithuania for 600 litai. "The coin is meant to mark an anniversary in the formation of a state, and the reintroduction of the litas 10 years ago also symbolizes the restoration of statehood," said R. Šarkinas.

Bankers promised that a couple of commemorative coins will be issued this year, one of which will be dedicated to the archcathedral of Vilnius.

CHICAGO LODGE TOKEN ARTICLE ON WEBSITE

Back in 1981, *The Knight* editor Frank Passic wrote an article entitled "Lithuanian-American Lodge tokens of Chicago," based upon the collection of the late Dr. Aleksandras Račkus (1893-1965). The article was published in the May, 1981 issue of *The Numismatist*, published by the American Numismatic Association on pages 1178-1191.

This classic article about the subject has been posted on the www.albionmich.com website, complete with original photographs of each individual token.

To access the article from the home page, click on the "Frank Passic Collected Writings" option on the right. After you reach his page, scroll way down toward the bottom and click on the "Numismatic Articles" option. You will then get a chronological listing of numismatic articles. Scroll down, and the aforementioned 1981 article will be titled near the bottom. Click on the title and you will get the article.

THE KNIGHT, Volume 26, No. 2. Issue #138. November-December 2003. The official publication of the Lithuanian Numismatic Association. Aleksandras Radžius, Baltimore, MD., DIRECTOR. Frank Passic, Albion, Michigan, EDITOR.

Subscription/Membership to Volume 26 (5 issues) a donation of \$15 or more. Write: Lithuanian Numismatic Association, c/o Alex Radžius, P.O. Box 22696, Baltimore, MD 21203. E-Mail: Lithnumis@hotmail.com.

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P-53 1994 1 LITAS UNCUT SHEET

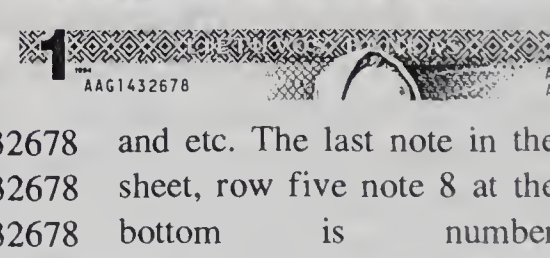
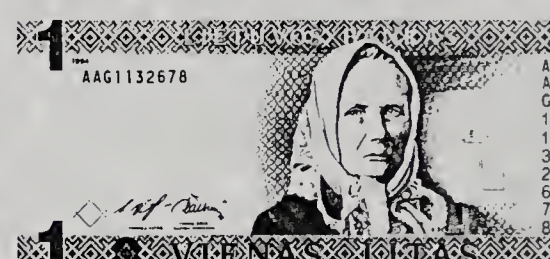
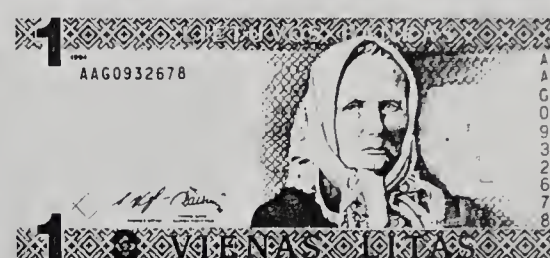
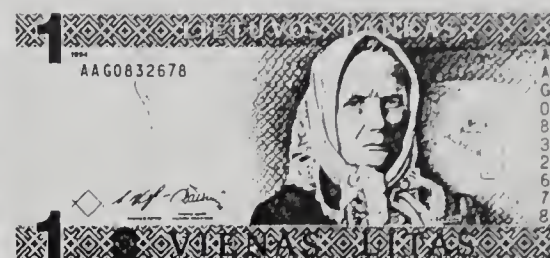
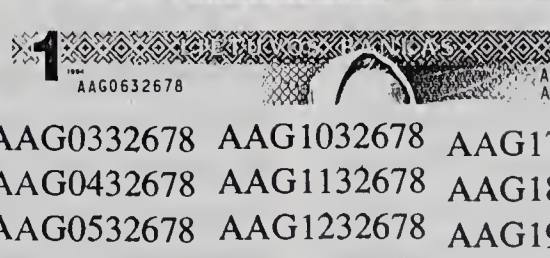
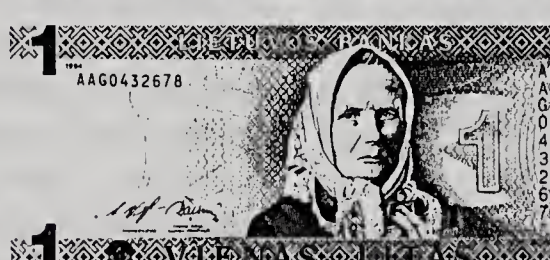
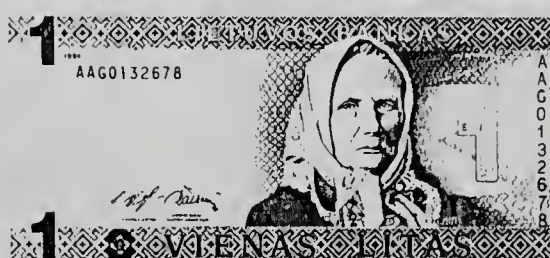
One of the more unusual offerings of the Bank of Lithuania in recent years has been full uncut sheets of the Pick-53 1994 1 litas banknote. The notes are arranged 8 down and 5 across for a total of 40 notes, or 40 litai face value. A sheet measures $26\frac{3}{4}$ across by $21\frac{3}{4}$ inches down. These are often framed and hung on a wall and make unusual gifts for Christmas or for birthdays.

The sheets are offered by the Bank of Lithuania for an amazingly low price of 41.60 litai plus shipping and handling. The note was printed by the Thomas De La Rue printers in England. the 2 and 5 litu notes were also formerly offered in sheets, but that offering was discontinued several years ago. For more information about ordering the 1 litas sheet, visit the www.lbank.lt website.

The reason we are featuring the sheet this month is to bring to the attention of collectors some special features. On the back in the top margin appears a date, "19 11 93" which means "November 19, 1993" the date this particular sheet was printed. The notes were placed into circulation on March 1, 1994.

Most importantly however, is the sequence of serial numbers on the face. While one would think that serial numbers are changed consecutively with the ending digits, not so with these sheets (2 and 5 litu included)!

It is the FIRST digits that are changed in sequence! Here is the serial number sequence of the sheet partially illustrated. There are 5 across rows containing 8 notes down. From top to bottom, first row AAG0032678
AAG0132678
AAG0232678



AAG0332678 AAG1032678 AAG1732678
AAG0432678 AAG1132678 AAG1832678
AAG0532678 AAG1232678 AAG1932678
AAG0632678 AAG1332678 AAG2032678
AAG0732678 AAG1432678 AAG2132678
Second row, AAG1532678 AAG2232678
AAG0832678 Third row: AAG2332678
AAG0932678 AAG1632678

and etc. The last note in the sheet, row five note 8 at the bottom is number AAG3932678 (remember 0 was the starting numeral for a total of 40 notes). Interesting!

By: Violeta Jasevičiūtė

From: Kauno Diena,

No. 276, Saturday,

November 2, 1994.

Translated by

Aleksandras Radžius



The National M.K. Čiurlionis Museum of Fine Art is holding an exhibition of works by Juozas Zikaras commemorating the 50th anniversary of his death. The creative personality of Juozas Zikaras is closely linked to the Lithuanian desire for independence and unquenchable yearning for freedom. The works of this artist can only be evaluated in the context of period sociological, political and historical events, since the natural realistic nature of his works alone would not necessarily have assured neither respect nor recognition. The works of J. Zikaras reflect his view of the world, his sense of citizenship and respect for mankind.

J. Zikaras is considered to be one of the best known early 20th century Lithuanian sculptors. As we stand on the threshold of the 21st century, we can attest that the influence of Zikaras' creativity has not dulled but rather has increased, as Lithuanian struggled on the thorn strewn path to freedom. The statue "Liberty," created in 1921, was the symbol which rose and fell with the nation, till it was raised again with wings outstretched on the pedestal in the War Museum court. Emotions rise as one looks at photographs which record the journey of "Liberty" in January of 1989 from the former Gallery of Sculpture and Stained Glass to its historically designated location. The winged Nike, an angel with outstretched wings but entwined with ropes, struggles in the hands of men as it is finally hoisted into the air above the Bouvelard of

Freedom (Laisvės Alėja). Is that not an allegory of our years of suffering?

The Museum's collection of works of J. Zikaras are exhibited and include the pieces "Bust of Vydūnas (Vydūno Biustas)(1922)"; "The Thinker (Mastyojas) (1910)," "Sorrow (Sielvarta)(1930)," and "Dreams (Svajonės)(1926)."

Also on exhibit are copies of 1918-1940 coins he designed. The actual silver and aluminum coins are not on exhibit for security reasons. During the Russian occupation, these treasures were carefully hidden and thanks to the dedication of Museum personnel, they were preserved. The first time they were exhibited was during a general exhibition of Lithuanian monies in Vilnius. Later they were exhibited in Kaunas in 1987, right before the start of the Sąjūdis Movement. We now again have the opportunity to see the actual coin proposals, some of which never became coins, and which, in my opinion, are more appealing than current coins.

With the earlier coins there is a story from the Smetona era. Supposedly, having collected many one cent coins, beggars tossed them into the Nemunas River so that the donors would be more generous. Maybe we should do this today also, only now we should be tossing the 5 cent pieces into the river--what can you buy with them?

Based on the information from Janina Abdulskienė, Director of the Numismatic Section, I will recount some of the history of the appearance of the first coins. On August 8, 1924 the Parliament passed a statute giving the

exceptional authority to mint and place into circulation metal coins of gold, silver and copper-aluminum. The statute was published on April 20, 1925. When all the legalities were in place, J. Zikaras quickly prepared design proposals. From these designs and in less than a year after the statute was passed, the British Royal Mint in London minted the silver coins and the King's Norton Metal Works in Birmingham minted the copper-aluminum coins. On June 3, 1936 the second statute regulating coins was passed. From 1936 to 1939 the Kaunas Mint was in operation and it minted the silver 1, 5, and 10 litai coins as well as the bronze 1, 2, and 5 cent coins which were designed by J. Zikaras. In 1938, the most impressive (and now the most rare) 10 litų coin was issued commemorating the 20th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Lithuania. As soon as these commemorative coins were issued, they were hoarded by collectors, government officials, military personnel and even farmers.

The gold 50 litai coin was never issued. But J. Zikaras also prepared a design for it as evidenced by plaster models of the obverse and reverse housed in the Numismatic Section of the M. K. Čiurlionis Museum of Fine Art.

75 million coins of the independent Republic of Lithuania were minted in the English and the Kaunas mints. With the Russian occupation, most were taken to Moscow and melted down. What remained became a rarity. In his book "Numizmatika (1970)," J. Karys writes with great admiration about the coins designed by J. Zikaras:

This famous artist, though not departing from traditional Lithuanian humility, very successfully combined the beauty of our heraldry, national designs, calligraphy and other design elements of modern coins. And of his renditions of Vytautas, Basanavičius, Smetona--they are actually alive! Nowhere else were these faces made so eternal. Today I appreciate even more that this was not flattery, but the truth, when the Director of the Belgian Mint told me that it was only national pride that prevented them from commissioning J. Zikaras to depict the likeness of their king on Belgian coins..."

The works of J. Zikaras are interesting and valuable. And quietly the calendar page will turn having written next to the name of J. Zikaras the most important word of all: freedom. Let's hurry to look at that page so that page so that we could again feel the pulse of the days we experienced, the joy of victory mixed with bitterness and the resolve which we will not let get mired in the swamp of doubt.

2003 COLLECTOR SETS ISSUED

The Bank of Lithuania has issued a proof-like collector set of its circulation coins. It was issued on October 17, 2003. This is similar to the 2000 set, the previous one issued. The set contains the following denominations: 10, 20, and 50 centų which are copper zinc and nickel; 1 litas which is copper-nickel; and the



**2003
COINSET**

bi-metallic 2 and 5 litai coins. It should be noted that as of this writing no 2003 dated coins have been struck for circulation, so these are the only circulation-design coins available for the year. 10,000 coinsets have been minted by the Mint of Lithuania. Coins are housed in an attractive fold-out album, with numismatic information on the back.

Coinsets are offered by the Bank of Lithuania for a cost of 40 litai. If you order 5 or more, the price is 38 litai. Shipment and insurance are extra. Orders should be sent to the Cash Department, Bank of Lithuania, 6 Gedimino Ave., LT-2001, Vilnius, LITHUANIA. Contact the bank e-mail for the total cost including shipping first at: isinkeviciene@lbank.lt. Information about ordering other coins from the Bank of Lithuania can be found on the www.lbank.lt website.

LNA CHARTER MEMBER EDWARD MIKUTIS PASSES.

LNA charter member Edward Mikutis of Berwyn, Illinois passed away in late October. He was at our first LNA meeting at the Chicago Coin Fair in 1979. Ed collected many things Lithuanian, and was a great resource concerning Chicago Lithuanian lodge tokens. He knew the late collector Dr. Aleksandras Račkus who also had a large Chicago Lithuanian lodge token collection. Ed wrote about his tokens here in The Knight and was always willing to help us with research and information. It was great to have known him.

FLOW OF SILVER INTO LITHUANIA AND THE PRAGUE GROSCHEN

Aleksandras Radžius

Lithuanians, like all the peoples of Europe, worked metal from before time was ever counted or recorded. The desirable qualities of durable, yet non-perishable metals such as copper, silver and gold were obvious to Lithuanians from the day they learned of them from their travels or commerce. In exchange for metals, Lithuanians could trade goods such as fine clothing of linen and fur; war steeds, draft and farm animals; spears, arrows and fine metal artifacts; and daily necessities such as grain, amber, wax, etc. Archeological excavations attest to the high culture and sophisticated craftsmanship of Lithuanians and all the peoples of Northern Europe. They traveled widely and peoples from southern, western and eastern cultures came to their lands.

During the centuries before the birth of Christ, Lithuanians would have obtained copper, iron and silver from the Celtic and Germanic nations to the south and to the west, as well as from Greeks and Romans. This metal would have arrived as ingots, coins, amulets, bracelets and rings. Concurrently, Goth and Swede traders would bring metal artifacts obtained from merchants plying the Silk Road.

Sources of silver varied, as some mines became depleted, others were being discovered. For a long time, vast silver deposits of the Samanids

(currently Iran) were worked and their coins as well as other silver objects found their way into Lithuania via trade along the northern spur of the Silk Road, the route from the Black Sea to the Baltic Sea. However, by the 11th centuries the Samanid mines were becoming depleted. But, silver was discovered in Silesia, Hungary and Bohemia. Trade also brought this silver into Lithuania.



A Prague groschen of Ladislaus II Jogalaitis (1471-1516), Obv: WLADISLAVS SECVNDVS/DEI GRATIA REX BOEMIE, rev: GROSSI PRAGENSES. Ladislaus II Jogalaitis and Ludwig Jogalaitis (1516-1526) were two Bohemian kings of Lithuanian heritage.

From his silver mines, Bohemian King Boleslav I (929-967) began minting silver denars (pfennigs) of approximately one pennyweight, after the Carolingian model. King Wencelaus I (1230-1253) added bracteates to the output of his Bohemian mints. But when great silver deposits were discovered near Prague at Kutna Hora (Kuttenberg), King Wenceslaus II (1283-1305) closed all other Bohemian mints, save the one at Kutna Hora (Kuttenberg). He decreed in 1298 that a Bohemian version of the groschen be minted also. These groschen were large silver coins of about two pennyweight and were

gaining popularity throughout Europe. Every domain having silver mines was minting groschen. The first Prague groschen were minted in 1300. Being of high silver content, the Prague groschen quickly became popular and became an international currency. Wenceslaus II also minted a reformed denar called 'parvus' (meaning 'poor'). King John the Blind of Luxemburg (1310-1346) added half groschen and gold ducats to the output of the Kutna Hora mint.

No doubt all Bohemian coins were welcomed in Lithuania, but Lithuanian documentation on the Prague groschen begins only in 1325. The Prague groschen continued to circulate in Lithuania, as did other species coins, even after the minting of native Lithuanian groschen was begun by King Sigismund II, the Old (1506-1544).

About a score of hoards containing Prague groschen have been found in Lithuania. These hoards contained groschen of Wenceslaus II (1283-1305), John the Blind of Luxemburg (1310-1346), Charles I (1346-1378), and Wenceslaus IV (1378-1419). Also found in Lithuanian, but in lesser quantities and sometimes only as single coins, are groschen of Ladislav Posthumus (1440-1457), George of Podėbrad (1458-1471), Ladislav II Jogalaitis (1471-1516), Ludwig Jogalaitis (1516-1526), and Ferdinand I of Austria (1526-1564).

Since hoards are buried only during times of unrest with only the most valuable items being placed into the earth, hoards are not a sample of the types of coins in circulation. Rather, hoards only serve to mark periods of conflict and warfare. Therefore, it is not scientific to infer from buried hoards how the influx of silver into Lithuania fluctuated over time whether in the form of Prague groschen, half groschen, parvus, denars (pfennigs) and bracteates or as silver from other sources. No doubt the smaller denomination coins, regardless of source, were reminted into Lithuanian small denomination coins.

But by the 15th century Bohemian silver mines began to run dry and the last Prague groschen was minted in 1549. However the mint at Kutna Hora continued to mint coins after the Austrian style until 1727, when the mint was finally closed down. But by now, silver and gold were coming into Europe from the Spanish possessions in the Americas.

Fortunately, we now have the technology which non-destructively analyzes coins for silver content, as well as for trace metals. From such analyses we could be in a position to begin unraveling the trail of silver into Lithuanian and to begin determining which of our early silver coins were reminted from Celtic, German, Scandinavian, Asian, Arabic, Silesian, Hungarian, Bohemian or American silver.

(Continued on page 8...)

FOR THE GUARDIANS OF FREEDOM: THE JANUARY 13th 8. COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL

From *Lietuvių Balsis* (The Voice of Lithuanians)

No. 2 (405) January 21, 2003, Pg. 4.

Translated by Aleksandras Radžius

Vilnius, January 13 (ELTA). On the occasion of the Defense of Freedom Day, the president awarded the January 13th Commemorative Medal to a number of Lithuanian and foreign citizens who between January and September of 1991 actively defended the freedom and independence of Lithuania.

On January 8, President Valdas Adamkus signed a decree awarding the decoration to 219 individuals, 11 of whom were post-mortem awards. This is the first new decoration of the newly restored Lithuanian state. Over 3,000 Lithuanians and foreign nationals have already been awarded this decoration, making it the most frequently awarded decoration.

"January 13 will always remain the turning point, when the nation and the people were joined in tragedy in heroism surprising the world with their sacrifices and bravery," V. Adamkus said to the guests gathered in the White Hall of the Presidential Offices.

In speaking about those events, in remembering the moments of tragedy for the nation, the president stated that we will always remember and embrace the mutual understanding, trust, and human closeness that it fostered.

"Maybe daily life sometimes makes us forget these feelings, but I am sure that they are deep in each of our hearts. They are the foundation which joins all the people of Lithuania, the whole nation, all the generations," underscored V. Adamkus.

The president reminded us that the events in Vilnius 12 years ago have become the painful, but final chapter in Lithuania's bid for freedom. "I will again repeat the frequently spoken words, that a statement was made equally by the fighters for freedom, the living rings that surrounded important landmarks, the people working in the television station and in the Parliament building, and those providing medical assistance to the injured," said the president.

Before presenting the medals, he thanked the defenders of freedom as well as the defenders of ideal of human honor, justice and freedom. The January 13th Commemorative Medal, as ELTA reminds us, was instituted to commemorate January 13, 1991 and is awarded to Lithuanian citizens and to foreign nationals who distinguished themselves in



defending the freedom and the independence of Lithuania between January and September of 1991.

The January 13 Commemorative Medal was awarded to the first president of Russia, Boris Yeltsin for his firm stance in regard to Lithuania in 1991. This award of the Lithuanian government is also awarded for other activities which supported Lithuanian independence and for other concrete actions which supported it in the arena of foreign politics.

PRAGUE GROSCHEN

(Continued from page 7...)

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By Aldona Aleksiejūnienė

From: Lietuvos Rytas, April 6, 2001

Translated by Aleksandras Radžius

It is hard to imagine that emergency currency issued during hyperinflation would be respected and remembered fondly. Who now misses the “Vagnorėliai” or talonai, that were in circulation a decade ago in Lithuania?

Šilutė and Rusnė issued emergency notes, called “notgeld.” They are still respected and people have held on to them to this day. Often an intelligent resident is happy when he is offered a price that can be agreed upon for one of these archaic notes displaying a portrait of Hermann Sudermann. The portrait of the author on the notes bears witness to the financial history of the city of his birth.

Notgelds were in circulation from the end of World War I when Germany was crushed and silver and nickel reserves were exhausted. Germany tried to cast coins in zinc and aluminum, but there was not enough of either metal. East Prussia, which included Šilutė and Rusnė, was on the brink of financial disaster.

A week ago, the Museum of Šilutė opened an exhibit of commerce covering the period from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. A few of the exhibits were devoted to the unique currencies of the area. These were in circulation from 1917 to 1923 and were designed and printed locally. The notes of Šilutė were technologically of surprisingly high quality, all the colors and signatures had survived.

The 50 pfennig note of Rusnė was issued on May 2, 1917. Šilutė issued its notes in September of 1918. All the authority that was required was a decision by the municipal council. On the Šilutė notes is written in German in Latin from “Half-mark paper note of the municipality of Heydekrug.” A five-digit red serial number gave it authenticity.

The second series, consisting of 25 and 50 pfennig notes, had a Gothic font. They were printed by the Otto Sekunna & Son Press in the center of Šilutė. 20,000 were issued. But these notes were sufficient for only a year.

The third issue of the Šilutė notes was also printed at the Otto Sekunna printshop and this issue was more decorative. The most beautiful building of the city, the firehouse, was depicted on the reverse. On the obverse was the slogan, “Work is the greatest of all

treasure, without work the land and the people wither.”

But even these notes, which were issued in two series, were not sufficient by 1921. Thus, Šilutė issued a 4th series, called the Hermann Sudermann series [EDITOR’S NOTE: These were printed in Berlin]. On the 25, 50, and 75 pfennig and the 1 mark notes is a portrait of the famous writer. On the reverse is a view of his parent’s manor. Also printed on the notes is the signature of H. Sudermann and excerpts from his works. The notes also have watermarks.

The first Sekunna, Carl Wilhelm Sekunna, opened up a bookstore in 1858. Later his son Otto started a printing shop. The printing shop was passed down through the family until 1944. Now it is a poultry store.



This 50 pfennig note features Hermann Sudermann.

During the Russian Czarist occupation, when Lithuanian books were banned, the Sekunna Press printed over 50 publications to be smuggled into Lithuania. The Sekunna's supported the Lithuanian National Movement in Lithuania Minor as well as Lithuanian cultural activities.

The City Council of Rusnė had some of their 1918-1921 notes printed by the Sekunna Press and some by their own printers, the brothers George and Adolf Vabell.

When this territory was joined to Lithuania in 1923, the Lithuanian currency litas was used. At that time, 100 kilograms of wheat cost 30 litai. A kilogram of pike or pork cost 3 litai, a couple of piglets--26 to 50 litai. Now 100 kilograms of what cost 22 litai, pork 8 to 11 litai and pike 7 litai for a kilogram. A single piglet costs 110 to 130 litai.

OLYMPIC 50 LITŲ COIN ISSUED

FOR SALE AD

FOR SALE: The following Lithuanian banknotes:

Pick-1 Centas 9/22 UNC \$55, EF \$45.

Pick-2 5 Centai 9/22 UNC \$55.

Pick-3 20 Centų (scarce note) 9/22 EF-AU nice! \$95.

Pick-7 1 Centas 11/22 UNC \$50.

Pick-8 2 Centų 11/22 UNC \$50.

Pick-9 5 Centai 11/22 EF \$40.

Pick-10 10 Centų 11/22 EF \$45.

Pick-11. 20 centų 11/16/22. EF \$80.

Pick-25 100 Litų, 1928. EF \$85.

Pick-26. 5 Litai, 1929. (Vytautas, Oath painting). EF \$75.

Pick-27 20 Litų, 1930 (Vytautas, statue of Freedom, Klaipėda port). EF \$85.

Frank Passic, 900 S. Eaton St., Albion, MI 49224. Albionfp@hotmail.com.



The Bank of Lithuania issued a commemorative 50 litų silver proof coin on October 17 celebrating the upcoming Atlanta 2004 Olympic games. 2,000 pieces were minted by the Mint of Lithuania. They are offered for sale for the price of 90 Litai by the Bank of Lithuania.

The coin is .925 silver proof, with a diameter of 38.61 mm. and a weight of 28.28 grams. It was designed by Giedrius Paulauskas.

The obverse features the Vytis emblem, the year 2003, and the legend "LIETUVA 50 LITŲ." The "LMK" mintmark appears on the far upper right. The reverse shows stylized women bicyclists moving to the right, with an "fast" looking italicized year "2004" below. Thus this coin has two dates: one on the obverse, and a different one on the reverse. The Lithuanian National Olympic Committee emblem appears on the far left. The legend states "ATĖNAI 2004," meaning "Athens, 2004."

The edge of the coin is lettered "XXVIII OLIMPIADOS ŽAIDYNES," meaning "28th Olympic Games."

LETTER

I thought you might be interested in seeing a recently issued coin dated 2002 by the break-away Trans-Dniester Moldova Republic honoring Konstantin K. Giedroits (Giedraitis), a famous Soviet soil scientist who won the Lenin Prize in science in 1927. A soil conservatory in Moscow was named after him as well. He died in the early 1930s officially of a heart attack, but recent research suggests he may have been an early victim of The Terror. He is a distant relative to me, but the exact relationship has not been established.

I am certain his roots were Lithuanian, but the only genealogical information found so far go into Imperial Russia. The entire family became doctors, indicating an educated family during a time only the aristocrats could obtain such status. The fact that he is a Giedroyc/Giedraitis indicates he is likely of the "central core" of the Lithuanian Giedraitis family, but we need further data.

Trans-Dniester struck only 500 coins. It is very difficult to obtain. I had to find their bank, send money by Western Union, and then wait 10 weeks for the coins to clear U.S. customs. --Richard Giedroyc, Sidney, OH. E-mail: Giedroyc@Bright.Net.

